



# rivers&trails

National  
Park  
Service



*rivers, trails, and conservation assistance program*

## RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS AND MISSION TRAILS

### Project Goal

The creation of a comprehensive Rio Bosque Wetlands Park development, management, and implementation plan that represents the needs and desires of the local community, and connects the park to the local cultural resources such as the Mission Trail.

### Background

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park lies within a major growth corridor of the El Paso metropolitan area. It is a 372 acres site located next to the Rio Grande in southeast El Paso County. Historically, the most productive natural habitats in the El Paso Region were wetland and riparian forests and woodlands of the Rio Grande floodplain. Today, they are virtually gone. The Rio Bosque Wetlands Park is a cooperative project to restore meaningful examples of these habitats. The location of the park makes riparian wetland habitat accessible to a large undeserved population for both recreational and education purposes. The park, as presently conceived, is an effort to restore a riparian habitat within the rapidly growing southeastern portion of El Paso County. An expanded planning study is needed to augment the park's potential by linking its nature-based tourism with the cultural assets of the surrounding areas.

The comprehensive approach that address two key elements are needed. Strategies to better link Rio Bosque Wetlands Park to the nearby historic Mission Trail to bolster the tourist appeal of the area; and, a long-term strategy for the maintenance and operation of the park based on a partnership of several participating entities. Fully realizing this comprehensive approach and the park's potential requires active community involvement. It is the ultimate hope that an educational park will be

created that will become a living museum providing a window into a past era when the Rio Grande ran free, when vibrant riparian flora formed a linear oasis in the desert, and the skies and marsh riverbanks were twice annually visited by tens of thousand of migrating birds; a unique place in El Paso where visitors can explore both the cultural and natural environment of the past.

### National Park Service Role

- Working with the staff of UTEP' Center for Environmental Resource Management to organize public meetings and facilitate discussion.
- Develop a diverse working committee that includes local and national stakeholders to serve to implement project goals.
- Assist plan graphics to better communicate design concepts.
- Help with research regarding land ownership and use restriction, including liability concerns regarding the use of irrigation canal and drain rights-of-way for hiking and bike paths.

### Community Visit to Rio Bosque



*continued*

## RIO BOSQUE WETLANDS AND MISSION TRAILS

### Project Results to Date

- Coordinate a community wide public charette with over 160 local residents and key stakeholders in attendance. The charette was intended to begin expanding community participation and identification of both physical and programmatic linkages within the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park and with the neighboring Mission Trail.
- Provide technical trail signage and trail design assistance.

### Project Partners

University of Texas at El Paso  
Mission Trail Association  
City of Socorro  
City of El Paso  
Ysleta del Sour Pueblo  
Metropolitan Planning Office  
El Paso Water Utilities  
Lower Valley Water District  
El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1  
Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Immigration Service  
Texas A&M University Research Center  
Ysleta Independent School District  
Socorro Independent School District  
Catholic Diocese  
Ducks Unlimited  
Audubon Society  
El Paso Inter-religious Sponsoring Organization  
Pass of the North Heritage Corridor, a project of El Paso Community Foundation  
Paso del North Health Foundation  
Rio Grande River Park Taskforce  
Tigua Council

### Contact

Ed Hamlyn, AICP  
Center for Environmental Resource Management  
University of Texas at El Paso  
500 West University Avenue  
El Paso, TX 79968  
e-mail [edhamlyn@utep.edu](mailto:edhamlyn@utep.edu)

Kristine Navarro  
Mission Trail Association  
One Civic Center Plaza  
El Paso, Texas 79901  
Ph: 915-747-7052

Paul Cusumano  
PO Box 728, Santa Fe NM 87504  
Ph: 505-988-6093  
Fax: 505-988-6097

### Community Charette, Socorro High School



2968 Rodeo Park Drive, West  
P.O. Box 728  
Santa Fe, NM 87501-0728

[www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca)  
Ph: 505-988-6090  
Fx: 505-988-6097

12795 W. Alameda Pkwy.  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, CO 80225-0287

[www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca)  
p: 303.969.2855  
F: 303.987.6676